

Vision and Directions of Capability-oriented Society in Korea

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Overview

The purpose of this study is to discuss about the vision and directions of capability-oriented society which is one of the major government policies currently in Korean society. To achieve the purpose literature review of related material, delphi method, analysis of foreign cases are employed.

Theoretical Background

Korean society has been academic ability oriented in the process of economic development intertwined with indigenous education fever, which resulted in highly-educated society. Human Capital Theory by Schultz explains effective value of academic ability in relation with the productivity and return on investment. However, academic-oriented culture has been criticized that it caused excessive competition, burden of high private tutoring costs, unfairness for social mobility, lack of field working capacity demanded by industrial development, rote-memory of existing knowledge, and cramming method of teaching.

On the other hand, Capability Approach by Sen argues that social justice and freedom would be realized by developing individual peculiar ability. Thus the concept of capability-oriented society is defined as righteous society in which equal opportunity and continuous system to develop and realize individual's capability and objective evaluation and screening system are built. Then capability of each person is a source of social and economic values.

Vision of Capability-oriented Society

On the basis of case studies on capability oriented human resources development and management in Europe and US, and the result of delphi method with 14 experts panel, vision of capability-oriented society is discussed. It is a society of justice that provides equal education and training opportunities to develop

and realize individual's capability freely regardless of his/her own economic background, guarantees continuous development of competency, and offers rational employment and reward labor market system.

Also in the society lifelong learning system is arranged for everybody so that people can develop their own capability fit to aptitude and hope during the life time. Naturally people would like to pursue specifications (qualification) related to individual's career and sublate unnecessary showing off specifications.

Directions of Policies for Capability-oriented Society

○ Normalization and Stabilization of School Education and Equal Opportunities of Education and Training

First, career guidance is the first step to develop capability from the early age to grasp one's own aptitude and individuality, instead of following fixed track. Free semester system will help explore future jobs and plan to develop job competency. To continue the effect of the system a regular subject should be installed during the rest of middle school years and in the high school years to continue to enrich the job competencies, or to follow any possible changes going through the process of growth.

Second, vocational education should be strengthened so as to develop proper skills for students. Many general high schools are suggested to be switched to comprehensive high schools which provide both general education curriculum and vocational education curriculum so that students can have chance to explore and decide their own career. Also apprenticeship programs should be implemented in the all vocational high schools to develop practical job field competencies asked by industries.

○ Changes of Labor Market to Capability-oriented Society

First, wage gap should be eradicated according to educational level and background, employment status, or size of the company. A person with high competency should be usually endowed with economic stabilization and social success.

Second, all the enterprises should have responsibilities of education and training for employees. In the labor market flexibility in utilization of manpower should be increase and the gap in working condition and wages be reduced.

Third, criteria of screening and evaluation should be systemized objectively to achieve fairness in the competition.

○ Construction of Lifelong Learning System for lifetime

First, learning leave system for workers should be activated beside reduction of working hours so that they can plan and continue to develop their own capability.

Second, lifelong learning programs for adults and aged should be expanded. Not only individual consulting for continuing education and training, but also tailored programs for individual needs should be expanded.

Third, financial support for lifelong learners should be systemized to facilitate capability building.

○ Publicity Activities to raise the Understanding of Capability-oriented Society

First, to maximize promotion effect on the capability-oriented society public officials, public institutions, and large enterprises should take the head of capability-based employment and evaluation system.

Second, all the nation should recognize that all occupations are equally honorable, and when individual pursue a job fit his/her own aptitudes and interest, capability can be developed best and can enjoy happy life.